



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## **Metro Youth Advocates Town Hall**

*Policy Recommendation Summaries*

*April 25, 2017*

### **Community Arts Initiatives - Public Art Quotas, Youth Rep. on Commission**

Recognizing that Louisville has a solid community of passionate artists, this policy aims to increase the existence and awareness of public art. The stakeholders include the residents of Louisville (especially youth), the Metro Council, and local businesses. In order to make public art reflect the voice of young people, one prong of this policy is to include at least 1 high school or college student on the Commission on Public Art. In order to balance the access to art in all communities, this policy also plans to implement a quota for the number of public art pieces within each government district in Louisville. This policy would also aim to increase art access in public schools. Students who make art and are exposed to art have higher test scores. Success has occurred with a public art quota in cities like Philadelphia. For example, Philadelphia has the highest rate of jobs produced by cultural sector; it creates 44,000 jobs with a \$3.3 billion impact on the regional economy and it generates \$169 million in tax revenues for the state and government. Sacramento also has a youth member of its public arts commission, which has proven to be successful. This policy would demonstrate that businesses should care just as much as the citizens and youth because making Louisville a more prominent art location will attract tourists and drive the economy.

### **Youth Safety & Support - JCPS Restorative Justice Practices**

This policy seeks to replace suspensions resulting from non-violent offenses and transition those consequences towards alternative methods of punishment that better fit the crime, an idea that has been successful in many school districts around the United States. Throughout schools in Kentucky, the policy for suspension is quite specific, but sometimes unnecessary. Through April 17th of this year, there were 8,708 instances of suspension in high school and 6,896 in middle school. In multiple cities around the United States, a policy of restorative justice has been put in place in order to benefit student education and reduce suspension numbers. Restorative justice is the idea that rather than being suspended for non-violent reasons, some actions that currently warrant suspension could be punished within the four walls of the school through alternative disciplinary action. Some of these nonviolent reasons are phone usage, leaving school, horseplay, and profanity or vulgarity towards staff. In the case of phone usage, an appropriate punishment could be aiding in answering office phones, leaving school could lead to assistance in the carpool line after schools, horseplay could result in students helping the nurse, and profanity or vulgarity towards staff could lead to a written apology and a discussion with teachers about the impact of language. Suspension can be detrimental to a child's education by causing additional absences that are not often able to be made up. The aim is to institute a practice of restorative justice within the local school system in order to benefit the students our city aims to serve.

### **Youth Civic Engagement - Youth Advisory Board for Lou. Metro Council**

To increase youth civic engagement, this policy proposes the implementation of a youth advisory board to work in conjunction with the Louisville Metro Council. Recognizing that youth participate less in civics compared to older populations, this policy sought to reach disengaged youth. The proposal of a city-wide youth policy board has been implemented in various cities, such as Memphis, New York City, Jersey City, Minneapolis, and New Haven. Many cities are recognizing the unique insight that youth provide in drafting city specific policy. The youth advisory board would have student representatives from various districts of Metro Louisville, working to advise the Metro Council on issues that they recognize and want to address. The goals of the policy are to increase youth civic engagement by



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providing them with an outlet to participate, provide a unique perspective to government in policy drafting, and enrich the Louisville community by developing a generation of passionate engaged individuals.

### **Affordable Housing - Diversifying House Stock through Tax Exemptions**

In the city of Louisville, 82% of people who earn between \$20,000 and \$34,999 a year pay more than 30% for their own homes. As of a study completed in 2016, rent for modest housing has increased since 2005 while median household incomes have declined. This policy seeks to counter this burden by encouraging the establishment of tax incentives in order to aid the costs of current affordable housing in Louisville. This tax incentive is an idea that has been derived from a similar policy in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, a real estate tax exemption on increased property values due to rehabilitation improvements encourages developers to undertake rehabilitation projects. This directly leads to a diverse house stock and neighborhood stabilization. Conceptually, developers would apply for the tax exemption by proof of development plans in applicable neighborhoods.

### **Domestic Violence Prevention - Domestic Violence Prevention Curriculum**

This policy proposal encourages Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) to establish guidelines for the integration of a curriculum in existing high school health courses that addresses the prevention of domestic violence. The policy recommends the inclusion of preventative measures and education relating to mental health conditions, drug and substance abuse, and the impact of domestic violence on home life. As a result of these implementations in Louisville public schools, the goals of this policy are to promote awareness of domestic violence and decrease the amount of domestic violence occurring within Metro Louisville.

### **Environment & Sustainability - Improving Water Quality through Asphalt Alternatives**

Our policy is to establish guidelines for the gradual integration of Louisville's asphalt roads with more absorbent alternatives. When a road is to be fixed, it will be fixed with porous asphalt or pervious concrete instead of traditional asphalt. Absorbent road materials allow water to flow directly into the ground instead of draining off into sewers. This would lower the chance of sewer overflow running into creeks, polluting Louisville's waterways. Using porous road materials saves money because the material lasts longer and less money would need to be spent on cleaning up waterways.

### **Reproductive Health & Sexual Edu. - Improving Access to Cervical Cancer Screenings & Preventative Services in Low-Income Metro Districts**

Kentucky has the 2nd highest incidence of cervical cancer in the country. Because of this, the proposal suggests that funding be set aside for low-income Metro Council districts to spread information to improve access to cervical cancer screenings and preventative services. The proposal also suggests that Metro Government create a set of guidelines for u funds. The funds will be used to inform the public on how to access the services that are provided by local medical centers.



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### **Community Volunteerism Initiatives - Increasing The Visibility of Volunteer Opportunities for JCPS Students**

Observing the lack of teen involvement in community service, this policy proposal seeks to increase visibility and accessibility of volunteer opportunities for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) students by encouraging and presenting opportunities in each district high school. This policy proposal urges JCPS to establish guidelines for either a volunteer fair or further means of local service-learning accessibility to students. To carry out our policy recommendation, it is proposed that JCPS hold a volunteer fair and invite local non-profits and organizations to set up booths to inform students of service opportunities. In turn, the volunteer information could also be made available to students on any effective platform (bulletin board, emails, school announcements, etc.). However, these are to be completely formed at JCPS's discretion. *Note from students: We are willing to work hand-in-hand with JCPS for this proposal.*

### **LGBTQIA+ Initiatives - JCPS Gender Neutral Restrooms**

This policy seeks to require all Jefferson County Public Schools under renovation to include at least one centralized bathroom as a single stall gender neutral bathroom. Along with the renovating schools, our policy recommendation seeks to require that all schools in current or future construction create at least one centralized gender neutral bathroom. This is a top priority because, above all else, JCPS's mission is to provide a safe environment for all of its students, no matter their gender or sexual identity. Transgender youth have a right to safe places to use the restroom when they are in school. There are more than 7,000 transgender youth in Kentucky and statistical distribution points to the fact that many of these youth reside within the JCPS districts.

### **Homelessness Prevention - Incentivizing Employers to Hire the Homeless**

The premise of this policy recommendation is to incentivize employers to hire homeless individuals and get them a steady income to become a more productive citizen in our economy and get them back on their feet. There is an abundance of homeless people in Louisville without steady employment. This policy recommendation would be to give property tax credit under the jurisdiction of the Metro Council for employers who hire homeless citizens. This will decrease unemployment rates among homeless people and thus prevent homelessness for the future.